

Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) Project Quarterly Report

Cooperative Agreement No. 279-A-00-10-00060-00

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

America-Mideast Educational and Training Services	AMIDEAST
Community Engagement Workshop	CE Workshop
Community Grant	CG
Ministry of Education	MoE
Ministry of Endowments and Guidance	MoEG
Ministry of Youth and Sports	MoYS
National Organization for the Development of Society	NODS
Participatory Analysis for Community Action	PACA
Peace Players International	PPI
Peer Facilitation and Project Development (PFPD) Program	PFPD
Peer Network	PN
Promoting Youth Civic Engagement	PYCE
Sport and Activity Coordinator Program	SAC
Steering Committee	SC
United States Agency for International Development	USAID

Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) Objectives

The PYCE Project is designed to support USAID's objective of increasing Yemen's stability through targeted interventions in vulnerable areas by (1) improving community-based institutions and mechanisms to ensure active participation in governance and locally driven solutions strengthened; and (2) improving access to and the delivery of quality services.

To support this USAID objective, the PYCE project objectives have sought: to strengthen the role of moderate religious actors in positively influencing Yemeni youth, and to establish and support youth sport and recreational programs. In response to changes in Yemen's political and socio-economic context, which has been influenced recently by the Arab Spring that led to the Yemeni Revolution, a new Transitional Government, and an ongoing process of national reconciliation and priority-setting known as the National Dialogue, the language of these objectives has been enhanced. These objectives have been expanded to foster a more diverse set of program components that can accomplish the overarching objectives of USAID in a new Yemen. The enhanced objectives are: 1) strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors; and 2) empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities.

This quarterly report covers the second quarter of PYCE Phase II. PYCE Phase II encompasses the reporting period of July 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 and is an extension of PYCE in its first phase, which was from October 12, 2010 to June 30, 2014.

The second quarter of PYCE Phase II covers the period from October 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. Major accomplishments include:

- International Literacy Day activities
- Establishing the first Annual Yemeni Youth Health Fair
- Increasing opportunities for girls in sports
- Ensuring weekly youth recreational activities in youth centers through teams of Peer Network Members and local youth

International Literacy Day

PYCE is aware that youth who drop out of school have difficulties accessing the workplace and struggle to care for themselves and contribute to their households. Without education, they are more likely to live in poverty, become at-risk for malnutrition, and, particularly for girls, fall victim to early marriage. PYCE also contends that undereducated youth are less likely to be engaged in the process of governance and struggle to form the professional and social networks which are critical to attaining career goals and making positive contributions to society. Therefore, PYCE Peer Network Members sought to provide non-formal education activities which would help students resolve academic delays and urge students to reimagine



themselves as high achievers and soon-to-be high school graduates.

Initially, Peer Network Members conducted activities in observance of International Literacy Day. Rather than a one-day activity, youth benefited from one to two week-long events at several K-12 schools over a 90-day period. Beginning in late September 2014, literacy events, such as reading and writing games and competitions, were conducted at MoYS 22 May Club and MoE Socotra School in Sana'a, with more than 100 youth participants. Additional literacy events

were conducted from November 7-27, 2014 at MoE 22 May School and Bilquis School in Abyan, reaching an additional 100 students. With high interest from students, school administrators and parent councils, PYCE supported literacy games at MoE Iqbal School in Lahej in December 2014.

PYCE also supported literacy through a range of activities at the National Library in Aden. In cooperation with PYCE vendor Bin Sanad, Peer Network Members installed fire extinguishers throughout the Library in November 2014. Peer Network Members, Peer Network applicants and youth volunteers also conducted a clean-up, greening and rehabilitation project in order to prepare the Library to host youth learning activities. These interventions enjoyed substantial community-buy-in, including volunteers from four local associations. Moreover, the installation of fire extinguishers was an important measure to safeguard the growing collection of books and periodicals and was followed by a workshop to train personnel and youth on using fire extinguishers properly and extinguishing fires safely. Once the rehabilitation was completed, the Library served as host to PYCE-supported youth workshops on photography, resume writing and interviewing. The workshop on photography was an important component in a larger series of PYCE-supported training in home-based income-generation and freelance opportunities, while the resume preparation and interviewing provided a valuable skills-building exercise to help youth become more marketable to potential employers. Thus, in addition to promoting literacy, PYCE and the National Library were able to enhance its offerings with career readiness activities. Through this teamwork and cooperation, the Library will be able to expand its programs for the 7,500 visitors it receives each year and conduct outreach to additional youth in nearby communities.

In late December 2014, Peer Network Members initiated the *Read to Recover Program*. The Read to Recover Program serves to build upon previous reading and writing activities in support of International Literacy Day. Through this Program, Peer Network Members will institutionalize reading and writing games and competitions at selected K-12 schools in Aden, Abyan, Sana'a and Lahej and the National Library in Aden. Games will be conducted alongside service activities such as clean-ups and rehabilitation projects, which Peer Network Members will implement along with students, such that they experience both an increase in their own skills and participate in the rebuilding of their neighborhoods. Peer Network Members will facilitate

events at no charge, within the school day, as well as after school. These free, accessible activities serve to counter current learning declines in K-12 schools across Yemen and provide hands-on opportunities for youth to contribute positively to their communities by working in teams to support the recovery effort. With continued success, these activities also support ongoing efforts to increase youth employability, which is widely recognized as a key part of the 2015 Yemeni Youth Development Agenda, National Dialogue Outcomes and overall USAID stability objectives.



First Annual Yemeni Youth Health Fair

PYCE galvanized more than 150 youth and 13 partners to launch the *First Annual Yemeni Youth Health Fair*. The Fair was conducted on December 27, 2014 in Aden.

In keeping with cultural norms and to more adequately address the particular health education needs of female and male youth, PYCE offered separate fairs at MoYS Mina Club for females, while males participated in the fair at MoYS Mansourah Stadium. The health fair was implemented to build upon previous PYCE Community Grants on first aid, nutrition, fitness and other health topics, which are relevant to youth and identified as areas of vulnerability. Indeed, PYCE Peer Network Members led presentations alongside local doctors and health care professionals. Their presentations were empowering, focusing on the ability of youth to promote and adopt healthy behaviors, as well as the capacity of youth to serve as a wellspring of health information for the larger community.

With strong community support, an additional health fair for students is scheduled for January 2015 at MoE 14 October School for females. PYCE has also received requests from Peer Network Members and youth in Abyan to conduct a health fair for students in Zinjibar.

Increasing Opportunities for Girls in Sports

PYCE interventions are based upon the sport-for-development model, which utilizes sport, recreation and play to achieve development goals in areas such as education and health. PYCE also understands that there are few public spaces for women and girls to gather and play in Yemen. Girls desire to both play and contribute to their communities. Yet, they are underrepresented in civic life and struggle to find a culturally-accepted venue to participate in after-school and summer activities.

In support of their aspirations, PYCE supported girls' basketball activities at MoE 14 October School in Aden from December 16-31, 2014. PYCE is working to establish a formal team at the School and link team members with female players at other schools in an effort to launch a community-based league. Also, in December 2014, PYCE Peer Network Members implemented a science competition at MoE Iqbal School and Showkani School in Lahej. The competition was conducted alongside a clean-up and tug-of-war (featured in the photo above) and served to promote greater interest in science and science-related careers among girls.

Also in Aden, PYCE supported basketball and other recreational activities from December 16-30, 2014 at MoE Khalifa School. These activities followed a recent PYCE-supported rehabilitation of the multi-purpose court, which increased the capacity of Khalifa School to host ongoing outdoor sport activities for girls. In addition, Peer Network Members and volunteers planted shrubs to establish a new green space in the school's courtyard and completed a school-wide clean-up. To address health needs, Peer Network Members also organized an awareness session centered upon hygiene and universal precautions.

Because of these interventions, hundreds of students, are now participating in the maintenance of their school and gaining valuable life skills through teamwork. Indeed,



neighborhoods are slowly becoming more accessible and inclusive settings for women's participation in civic life and more supportive of girls' aspirations for both play and recognition in the public sphere.



Team-Based Volunteer and Sport Activities

PYCE understands the importance of peer learning and youth-led interventions. In addition to Community Grants and flagship leadership and development programs, PYCE Peer Network Members are cooperating with youth club members in teams to facilitate weekly service activities and sport competitions. Teams have been formed at MoYS Gela Club in Aden, MoE Bilquis School and Khowla School for girls in Abyan and Peer Network Members are hosting activities in cooperation with MoE Wadah Sawahel School for males and MoYS Hassan Club in Abyan (team featured in the photo below). PYCE has also received requests to support additional teams at schools in Abyan, as well as schools in Aden and Lahej.



Through their dedication, youth are conducting clean-ups, maintaining PYCE-supported solar systems, planting gardens, repairing equipment and facilities and coordinating basketball, soccer, handball and other sport activities. As a result, youth clubs and schools are no longer viewed as dilapidated facilities within communities. Rather, they are becoming known as community resources, rehabilitated for the purpose of youth development and youth voice.

PYCE Progress toward Targets

The charts on the following page illustrate PYCE achievements in the second quarter of Phase II and provide totals for both the first and second quarters of Phase II, as well as grand totals for PYCE I and II. In most instances, previous targets were exceeded and PYCE is on track to meet or exceed targets for fiscal year 2015. The first chart encompasses activities related to Intermediate Result 1 and the second chart incorporates activities which correspond to Intermediate Result 2. A brief summary immediately follows this representation. The summary also incorporates data on PYCE cross-cutting themes such as safety, gender equity, career readiness, and sustainable development.

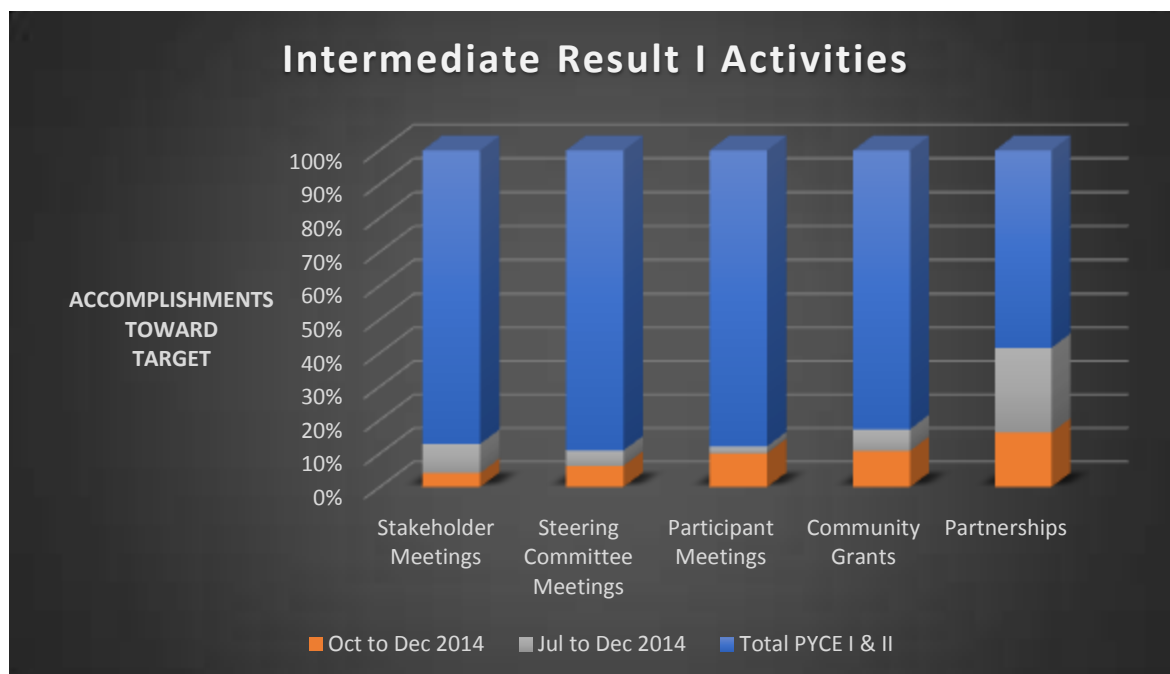


Table 1*: *Intermediate Result 1* is to strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors.

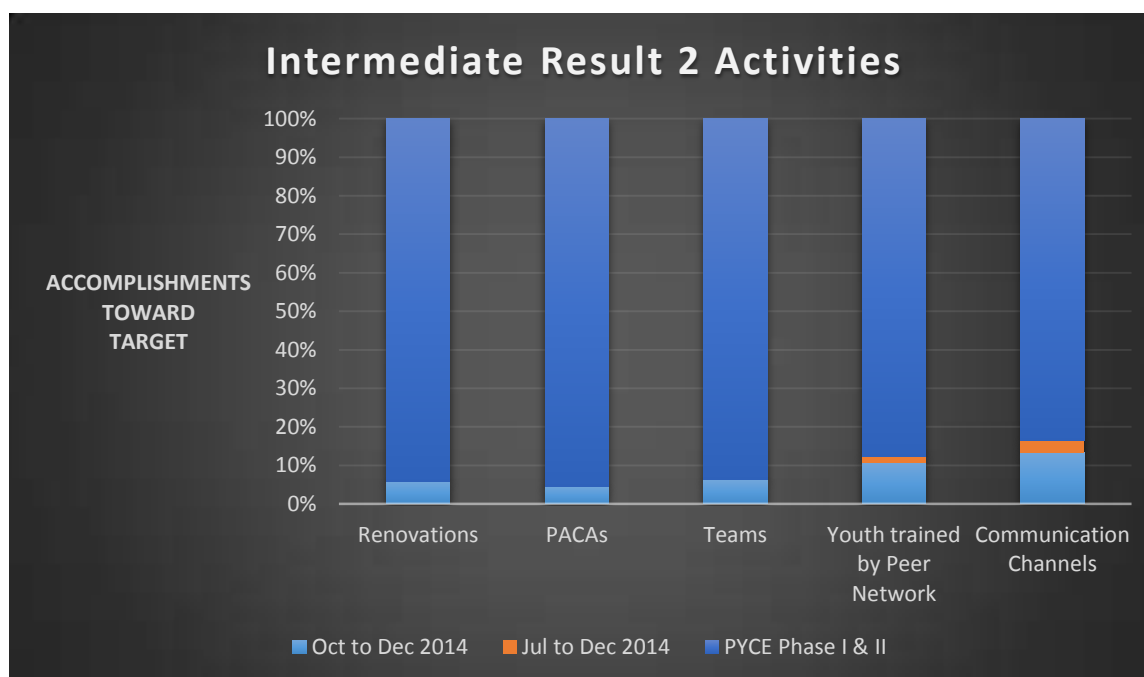


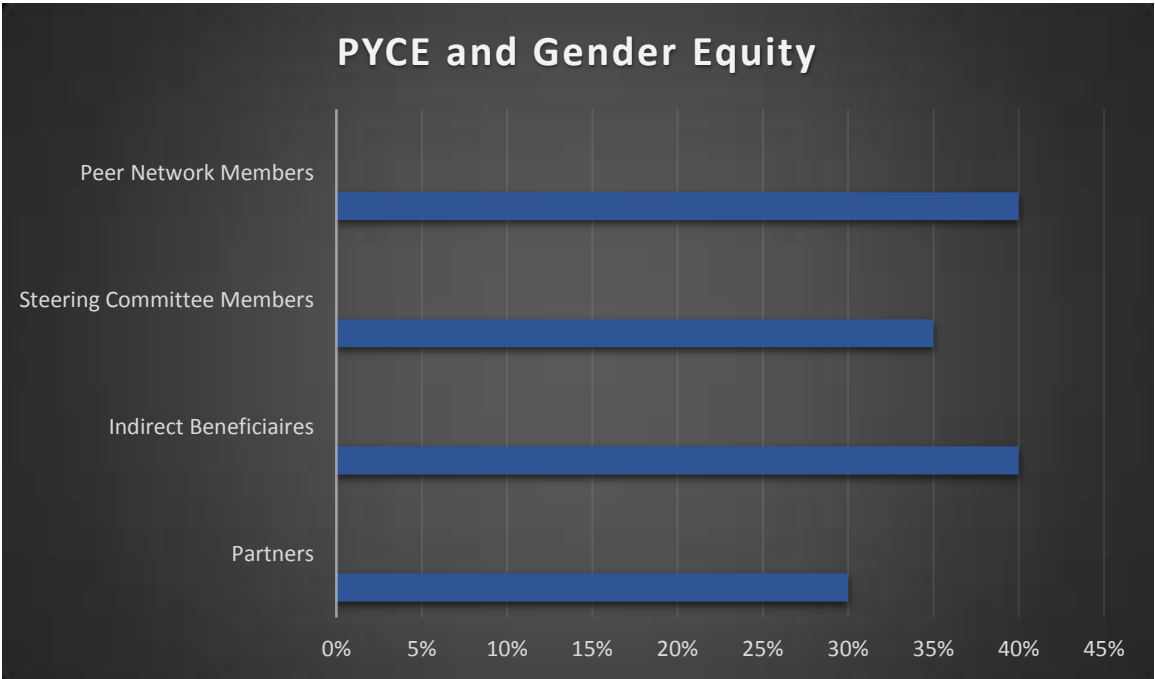
Table 2*: *Intermediate Result 2* is to empower youth to positively affect their local communities, through sports, recreational programs and other community-based engagement activities.

**Reports are still coming in the field and numbers are subject to change.*

This quarter was particularly noteworthy because of the manner in which PYCE stakeholders came together to identify common interests and support new youth centers and new interventions to address youth needs. For instance, stakeholder meetings were conducted in November 2014 with Deputy Governor of Aden, Abdul Kareem Shaif, and Secretary General of the Khormakser Local Council, Ahmed Lamlas. In addition, PYCE continued its meetings with representatives of the Hadramaut Youth Foundation (HYF) from Phase I, with a meeting in November 2014, with HYF Program Manager, Ahmed Omar Bamar. PYCE is working with these actors to leverage resources, to establish complementarity, and to increase the impact of its youth interventions. Moreover, in December 2014, PYCE held a meeting with the newly-appointed Minister of Youth of Sports, Rafat Al-Ak'hali, to discuss increasing sport and non-formal education for girls, to frame and institutionalize safety standards in youth clubs and K-12 schools and to promote greater youth civic engagement, based upon the sport-for-development model, particularly in rural areas such as Abyan. Follow-on meetings with local Ministry officials, PYCE Team, and Peer Network Members are scheduled for January 2015.

PYCE has also made strides toward youth employability—a key component of the National Dialogue Recommendations and 2015 Youth Development Agenda. PYCE launched a workshop series on resume preparation and interviewing in December 2014. The workshop is held over a two-day period every other month for up to 16 Peer Network Members. Four Peer Network Members from Sana'a, Aden, Abyan and Lahej will be able to enroll in the workshop and receive valuable information to accompany their career goals. This workshop is particularly useful for Peer Network Members, because like most Yemeni youth, they are either unemployed or underemployed and value opportunities to become more marketable and competitive among job seekers. To enrich this opportunity, PYCE promotes partnerships with businesses, associations, community-based organizations, and other youth-serving institutions. Partners have cooperated with PYCE to co-facilitate training sessions, donate supplies and equipment, and sponsor sport teams. Partners also attend events and advise Peer Network Members about available employment options, scholarships, internships, and other advancement opportunities. As a result, they help ensure the sustainability of youth activities and promote the linkages needed to transition from school to work.

This cooperation enhanced the impact of PYCE Community Grants, which provide invaluable experience for youth in program planning and implementation. For example, in late November 2014, Peer Network Members at MoE Saada School in Aden rehabilitated the court and conducted an awareness session on universal precautions, a clean-up, and long-awaited maintenance and upgrades in the classrooms. More than 300 students participated in these activities, and the rehabilitation has made it possible for the school’s 1,200 students to engage in regular basketball and volleyball competitions. Thus, students can continue to gain from these activities in the weeks and months ahead. Peer Network Members are also working with MoE Qataban School in Aden, where recent basketball and soccer competitions were held alongside



24, 2014.

Table 3: PYCE strides toward gender equity

PYCE and its partners coalesced around priorities such as gender inclusion and outreach to underserved youth populations such as rural youth. For instance, in cooperation with female-owned Classic Studio, its founder, Laila Ibrahim Mohammed, conducted a workshop for more than 40 female students and local women from November 16-19, 2014. Further, in cooperation with MoYS Gelah Club, MoYS Tennis Club and the Yemen Tennis Federation in Aden, existing



tennis activities and tournaments established in PYCE Phase I, incorporated female-only practices this quarter. Indeed, female tennis tournaments are anticipated in March 2015 and will accompany clean-ups and other service activities.

This activity is significant because it adds to the diversity of offerings available to women and girls and provides a vital linkage between their fitness goals and desire to service their communities through volunteerism. To increase the capacity of MoYS Tennis Club to respond to youth needs, encourage female activities and promote volunteerism, PYCE supported an equipment renovation in December 2014.

To ensure a wide-cross-section of stakeholders, PYCE held a Community Engagement (CE) Workshop in Aden in late October 2014. The CE Workshop is a part of the Project's flagship leadership and development portfolio, which introduces youth to civic engagement and provides classroom and experiential learning exercises to foster and advance skills in program planning and implementation. This process helps youth respond to the needs in their communities while cultivating marketable skills, which, in turn, facilitates their entry into the workplace. Nearly 40 youth completed the CE Workshop and were selected for membership in the Peer Network, bringing the total number of Peer Network Members to over 640. Additional Workshops for aspiring Peer Network Members are scheduled for January and February 2015 in Sana'a, Lahej and Abyan. With these additional workshops, PYCE expects to increase the number of Peer Network Members to 700 by March 2015. New community actors, including moderate religious actors, also joined PYCE Steering Committees in Sana'a, Lahej and Abyan and are working with PYCE to identify new youth clubs where the project can expand. As of December 31, 2014, PYCE registered over 145 Steering Committee Members.

PYCE strives to achieve a fifty percent gender balance throughout its programming. To date, nearly 40% of Peer Network Members—the Project's direct beneficiaries—and more than 30% of PYCE Steering Committee Members are female. Moreover, indirect youth beneficiaries



trained by Peer Network Members are almost 40% female. PYCE is also actively working to cooperate with female community actors, including moderate religious actors, who can support the Peer Network through new partnerships. To date, fifteen of PYCE partners are female.

PYCE is continuing to increase safety standards at K-12 schools and clubs and holding discussions with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth and Sports in order to institutionalize these standards. As of December 31, 2014, PYCE has installed nearly 250 fire extinguishers and more than a dozen first aid kits in five governorates.

From October 1 to December 31, 2014, fire extinguishers were added to 5 youth clubs and K-12 schools, including MoYS Talia Club, a new PYCE-supported youth center in Hauta, Lahej. These installations are rare safety measures, as children attend Yemeni schools each day without equipment that is customary in most American schools. The fire extinguisher installations were accompanied with training for parents, teachers and students, who were empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely extinguish fires and keep thousands of children safe from harm. Moreover, clean-ups were conducted to safely remove potential fire hazards and ensure schools and clubs have both a preventative measure and emergency preparedness tool (as per the picture above).

With respect to performance indicators, PYCE supported 33 partnerships this quarter. To date, PYCE has facilitated more than 100 partnerships. With their support, Peer Network Members have implemented 15 Community Grants. Through Grants and additional PYCE events, Peer Network Members trained over 880 youth. Indeed, as of December 31, 2014, nearly 7,000 youth, as indirect beneficiaries, have received training from Peer Network Members. At this pace, PYCE could exceed project targets at mid-term, by more than 25 percent.

To accompany and sustain Peer Network activities, PYCE supported 1 renovation this quarter, representing 50 percent of the target of 2 for 2015. Peer Network Members and local youth formed 5 teams and conducted 12 service activities and 8 competitions. Members continued to engage the larger community in support of their activities, via 25 two-way communication channels this quarter. This number incorporates 16 communication channels to promote their events and 9 channels to gather feedback from community members.

Service activities were also completed by aspiring Peer Network Members, with 8 Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) accomplished this quarter, which represents 100% of the target for 2015.

Ongoing meetings and events are conducted to exchange ideas, promote civic engagement throughout Yemeni communities and recognize accomplishments. One hundred-nineteen PYCE stakeholders were gathered in meetings to provide inputs for PYCE strategic plans and support for expansion. Seven meetings of SC Members were held, along with ten meetings of PYCE participants.



Following the CE Workshops and selection of new PN Members, PYCE will conduct the Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program and the Peer Facilitation and Project Development (PFPD) Program from January to March 2015. PYCE expects to train 60 in each of these programs: 30 in the SAC and 30 in the PFPD Programs. This total will reach 100% of target for the SAC Program for 2015 and 100% of the target for PFPD Program for 2015. Moreover, these training programs will equip Peer Network Members to scale and sustain the activities launched in the first half of PYCE Phase II such as the recent basketball and volunteer events at MoE Khalifa School, where a large group of female students (featured in the photo on the preceding page) are eager to get involved.

PYCE will further enhance its programming in Phase II with the following focus areas:

- 1) Increase the type and number of youth activities at youth centers, including female-only times and/or days to promote gender inclusion
- 2) Increase the number of partners that support Peer Network activities to promote sustainability

- 3) Increase competitions including science fairs and exhibits to promote greater interest in science-related careers
- 4) Institutionalize the Read to Recover Program at selected PYCE-supported public schools
- 5) Establish additional teams of Peer Network Members and local youth at K-12 Schools and youth clubs
- 6) Encourage natural resource conservation through rainwater harvesting and micro grants
- 7) Conduct bi-monthly workshops centered on resume preparation and interviewing as well as additional events to increase youth employability
- 8) Support two additional equipment renovations in Lahej or Abyan
- 9) Support tennis and basketball tournaments for male and female teams
- 10) Increase youth participation in the arts and youth capacity to renew their neighborhoods through art exhibits, greening activities and establishing libraries

PYCE Lessons Learned

Despite the fluid political and social situation, PYCE has found the majority of its youth centers opened year round; although occasional roadblocks and security concerns have led PYCE to reschedule a few events, most activities occur as planned. Local youth have found a respite from this insecurity, particularly in youth clubs that are nearby their homes. Thus, because youth centers are often one of the few public spaces that youth can access in times of disturbances and protests, PYCE recognizes the importance of supporting youth clubs without interruption throughout this Transition process.